

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-25 are pending in the above-identified application, and were rejected. With this Amendment, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-15, 18-19, and 25 were amended, and claims 4, 8, 16-17, and 20-24 were cancelled. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-15, 18-19, and 25 are at issue.

**I. Objection To Drawings**

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(5) because they include reference characters not mentioned in the description. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

With this Amendment, Applicants have amended the specification to include the reference characters from figures 7 and 15. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this objection.

**II. 35 U.S.C. § 112 Indefiniteness Rejection of Claims**

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. With this Amendment, Applicants have cancelled claim 4. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

**III. 35 U.S.C. § 102 Anticipation Rejection of Claims**

Claims 1-5, 7-13, and 15-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Shishido, et al. (U.S. Patent 5,869,782). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to a digital signal processing method for reproducing digital signals. The method comprising the steps of storing a data block to be used repeatedly at least twice out of a plurality of data blocks obtained at least by dividing a digital signal on a time

base, receiving information indicating the period of time during which said data block is retained, and deleting said data block based on said information.

Shishido et al. discloses a musical data recording method and reproducing apparatus. In Shishido et al., the data is temporarily stored in a recording medium. Shishido does not disclose or suggest deleting the data based on information indicating the period of time during which the data is retained, as required by claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 and claims 2-3, 5, 7, 9-13 that depend from claim 1 are allowable over Shishido et al.

For reasons similar to those discussed above with regard to claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 15, 18-19, and 25 are also allowable over Shishido et al. Claims 4, 8, 16-17, and 20-24 have been cancelled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

**IV. 35 U.S.C. § 103 Obviousness Rejection of Claims**

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shishido et al. in view of Fiala et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,906,991). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As discussed above, Shishido does not disclose or suggest deleting the data based on information indicating the period of time during which the data is retained, as required by claim 1. Thus, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Shishido et al. and Fiala et al. to derive claim 6. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shishido et al. in view of Veltman (U.S. Patent No. 5,481,543). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As discussed above, Shishido does not disclose or suggest deleting the data based on information indicating the period of time during which the data is retained, as required by claim 1. Thus, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Shishido et al. and Veltman to derive claim 14. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

**VI. Conclusion**

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all claims are clearly allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully request early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 13, 2004

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